

The Other White Meat®

Charles R. Harness, director of industry information, National Pork Producers Council, Des Moines, IA

A well-planned and coordinated national marketing program to improve the sale of pork in the United States has changed consumer attitudes about this meat product. It began in November 1986 when the National Pork Board launched the National 100 Percent Legislative Pork Producers checkoff (this is an assessment on pork producers and importers). The Board (15 members nominated by producers and appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture) established a first-year industry budget of \$22 million for promotion, research, and consumer education programs.

The money for these programs comes from checkoff funds collected on all U.S.-produced market hogs, feeder pigs, and breeding stock, as well as imported hogs and pork products. The rate is one-quarter of 1 percent of market value. The compliance rate averaged 98 percent during the Board's first year, and refund requests remained low, averaging about 10 percent of all checkoff funds collected during the year. Seventy cents of every producer checkoff dollar is being spent to help stimulate consumer demand for pork.

Campaign Theme: The Other White Meat®

The major thrust is a bold campaign begun in 1987 to reposition fresh pork in the minds of consumers as a lean, nutritious, and convenient product that is also versatile and fits right into the modern lifestyle. In consumer research conducted before the

campaign started, over 40 percent of all consumers already subconsciously viewed fresh pork as a white meat. Pork was even defined as a white meat in Webster's dictionary. Extensive pretesting of the "White Meat" concept showed it to be a highly believable and extremely effective way to get the message about fresh pork across to consumers.

Campaign Changing Consumer Attitudes

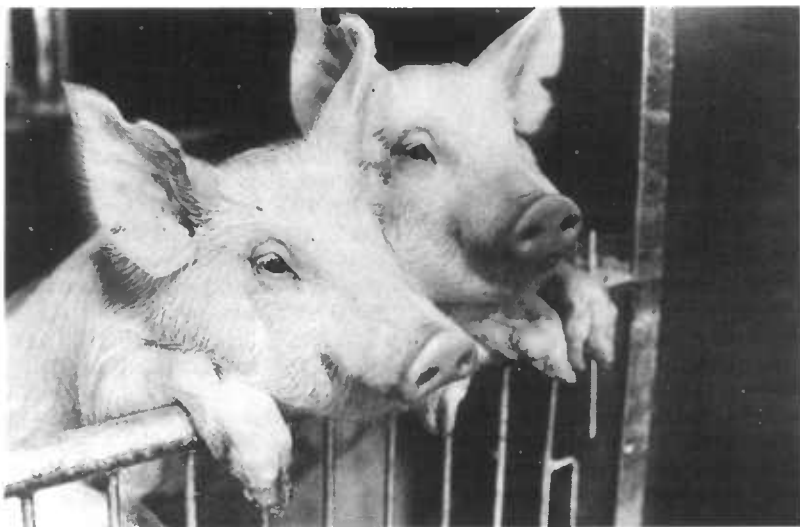
Seven months into the campaign coordinated by the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) an independent research company reported, "there is growing evidence that the 'White Meat' message is changing consumer attitudes about pork." In 7 short months, the "White Meat" campaign had established itself as one of the most effective food campaigns ever developed. It was helping to sell more pork.

20 TV Markets Targeted

The "White Meat" campaign targeted 20 major metropolitan population centers, and placed two 30-second television commercials on stations in these markets. One of the commercials featured classic dishes updated to include pork. The other featured lean, low-calorie pork.

Ads in 18 Magazines

The print campaign included 18 magazines selected from the women's service, lifestyle, and cuisine categories. The ads featured full-color photos of classic dishes, such as cacciatore, cordon bleu, a l'orange and



The major thrust of a promotion campaign begun in 1987, by the National Pork Producers Council, was to reposition fresh pork in the minds of consumers as a lean, nutritious, convenient, and versatile product. The campaign is helping increase the consumption of pork. (Norman E. Pruitt)

florentine, all made with fresh pork. All the ads included a coupon which readers could cut out and send in for copies of recipes. By the end of 1987, over 146,000 requests for free recipes had been received.

Nearly 85 Percent of Targeted Market Reached

The combined television and magazine "White Meat" campaign reached millions of Americans in 1987. The "White Meat" message reached nearly 85 percent of the projected target audience—women between the ages of 25 and 54 who are light-to-moderate users of pork. Awareness of pork as a "White Meat" increased 72 percent in these television markets during the first 7 months of the campaign. Even in markets where magazines were the only support, 35 percent of those surveyed 7 months into the campaign were aware of the pork industry's new promotion effort.

States Provide Additional Funds

The "White Meat" campaign received widespread industry support. Twenty State pork producer associations contributed \$750,000 in State funds to further strengthen the national effort in target cities. The National Pork Board matched the additional State funds dollar for dollar.

A Coordinated National Marketing Program

The national media campaign was conducted in concert with other aspects of the marketing campaign program coordinated by NPPC. Four NPPC regional merchandisers helped to raise promotion funds by encouraging cooperative promotion efforts by packers and food retailers. The major objective was to devote more meat case space to fresh pork, and to encourage food retailers to feature

pork more often in their own advertising. During 1987, the four regional merchandisers held numerous retail seminars and conducted special video training programs as well as a national store display contest. Over 20,000 retail food stores participated in one or more of the industry's cooperative programs during the year.

Peggy Fleming Serves as Industry Spokesperson

Olympic gold medalist Peggy Fleming became the official national spokesperson for America's pork producers in 1987. She made numerous appearances around the Nation on TV and radio programs, telling consumers how pork fits into her own personal lifestyle.

Merle Ellis Visits Food Editors

Merle Ellis, one of the Nation's best-known authorities on meat selection and cooking techniques, accompanied NPPC's own consumer affairs director in one-on-one meetings with the food staffs of such major magazines as *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Weight Watchers*. They carried the message of today's leaner pork to food and nutrition professionals across the Nation, and in the process generated ideas for pork features in many of the magazines they visited.

Foodservice Industry Also Targeted

The campaign aimed at the giant foodservice industry tied in directly with the overall "White Meat" effort. Eye-catching color ads were placed in the foodservice industry's own leading magazines, showing foodservice operators how pork could be easily substituted for classic menus that traditionally feature other protein sources. Over 14,000 foodservice units representing more than 150,000 restaurants and institutions requested the recipes that accompanied the ads.

America's Cut™ Introduced

In 1987, America's pork producers became the first national commodity group to develop and trademark a standardized, premium meat cut and then market it nationally. In cooperation with eight State producer associations, NPPC introduced "America's Cut™" in July 1987. By the end of the year, it was being featured in 23,000 supermarkets and was available at 3,000 restaurants.

Health Professionals Get Special Messages

Health professionals are influential in advising consumers on their eating habits. The National Live Stock and Meat Board, using pork producer checkoff funds, provided the Nation's doctors and dietitians the latest nutritional information on pork during 1987. They held special seminars and placed advertising in publications read primarily by health professionals.

Goal Achieved

As the first year of the national legislative checkoff progressed, the news media and market analysts noted that a stronger demand for pork seemed to be developing. One publication, *Pork Pro Newsletter*, said that "a big share of the credit for the surge in pork demand must go to the 'Other White Meat' campaign."

By year's end, University of Missouri agriculture economist Glenn Grimes was saying, "The apparent increase in demand for pork put \$500 million in U.S. pork producers' pockets during 1987 that wouldn't be there under normal conditions."

And Board president Virgil Rosendale said, "All segments of the pork industry have pulled together as a team to make sure the checkoff works, and that programs and projects undertaken with producer funds are run effectively and efficiently."